

October 2006

Welcome to the twenty-second edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to over 1200 of our users and partner agencies to keep them informed of data updates, GIS events, and on-going technology developments. This newsletter will not replace more focused e-mails that many of you currently receive. A page on our website has been created for the [GISette](#). There you will find back issues of the GISette and an [online subscription form](#).

While our primary intent in publishing the GISette is to disseminate information related to MassGIS initiatives and data development in particular, we also see the GISette as a means of communicating public agency GIS news. So we encourage readers to send in updates or announcements concerning public agencies that they would like included in the GISette. We particularly want to encourage submission of announcements concerning data development projects. Announcements should be sent to Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

GIS Day at the State House

Please join us for our eighth annual GIS Day event at the [Massachusetts State House](#) on November 16 from 10 AM to 2 PM. We have lined up a wide variety of exhibits from State Agencies, Regional Planning Agencies, Municipalities, Non-Profits, Colleges and High Schools. Some of the exhibitors include: Jerrard Whitten from the [Merrimack Valley Planning Commission](#) who will show Pictometry Oblique Aerial Imagery of the Spring 2006 Flooding; Matt Barrett from the [Town of Concord](#), who will demonstrate an online assessors parcel viewer that he created; and Kathleen Attfield from the [Silent Spring Institute](#), showcasing their online Health and Environment Mapping Tool.

At noon, Representative Stephen Kulik, Middlesex North Register of Deeds Richard P. Howe, Jr., and Dave Beck, Town of Hull Assessor and Chairman of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers GIS Committee will discuss the [Usefulness of GIS in State, Regional, and Municipal Government](#) settings. Please visit our website for a full listing of [GIS Day exhibitors](#).

How to Best Display the 2005 Color Ortho Images

We've heard from several users with questions on how to improve or adjust the appearance of the 2005 color ortho images, especially the MrSID single tiles and mosaics. MassGIS has posted a [Display Options page](#) on our Web site. This is the best place to start to learn about the different ways the appearance of the imagery may be modified to suit your preference.

A note about the MrSID versions of the imagery: If you are using ArcGIS, ArcMap will NOT apply any stretch (which can brighten the imagery) to MrSID files, resulting in perhaps a darker appearance than expected. ArcMap WILL automatically apply a 2 standard deviation stretch to Tiff, JPEG2000, and ArcSDE formats of these images, thus significantly brightening them without any modification by the user. So, if you are using the MrSID files, the quick way to improve their appearance is to follow the instructions on the [Display Options page](#). Regardless of the image format, ArcGIS users have the ability to customize the appearance of the imagery to their liking.

Users of ArcView 3x (without the Image Analysis extension) should be aware that applying a piecewise linear stretch to the images provides a way to modify their contrast and brightness, albeit

in a band-by-band method. (This also is described on the [Display Options page](#)). Without this modification, ArcView 3x users and those of other software that do not provide a way to enhance the appearance of imagery will see the original, unmodified data, which, again, may appear darker than expected (particularly compared to the 2001 color ortho imagery, which was delivered to MassGIS with more enhancement and post-processing). MassGIS staff is working on producing a new set of MrSID files that will address the dark appearance of those currently available for download and purchase. Please watch our Web site in the coming weeks for the availability of this enhanced set of 2005 imagery.

Software Grant Update

To date, through the Massachusetts Conservation Mapping Assistance Partnership Program ([MACMAPP](#)), ESRI, with MassGIS, has delivered GIS software at minimal cost to 13 conservation commissions and 14 conservation organizations. Another six groups have been approved, and 21 have applied and are awaiting approval. The program was created to assist municipal conservation commissions and non-profit environmental organizations in building GIS capacity; commissions and environmental non-profit organizations in all areas of the state have participated. ArcGIS, a MassGIS DataViewer and training are included in the non-competitive grant.

Database Updates

- **[New and Updated Layers from the Executive Office of Transportation](#)** - 10/16/2006
Now available from EOT is a layer depicting MBTA Parking Lots. Also, the Park and Ride Lots datalayer has been updated. These layers are current as of September, 2006.
- **[NPDWSA Layer Updated](#)** - 9/25/2006
DEP GIS Group has updated the [Non-Potential Drinking Water Source Areas](#), which includes a major review and re-development of the datalayer.
- **[New NHESP Natural Communities Layer](#)** - 9/19/2006
This datalayer consists of polygons that represent the extent of various natural communities of biodiversity conservation interest in Massachusetts.
- **[C21e Layer Updated](#)** - 9/18/2006
DEP GIS Group has updated the [Tier Classified Chapter 21E Sites](#) datalayer. The update included: 84 sites added, 39 removed, 1 moved.
- **[NHESP Regulatory Layers Updated](#)** - 9/15/2006
NHESP has updated the [Priority Habitats of Rare Species](#), [Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife](#), and [Certified Vernal Pools](#) layers. Data are current as of July 14, 2006.

What's New on the MassGIS Web Site

- **[Updated Municipal GIS and Parcel Status Maps](#)** - 10/25/2006
These maps, updated as of October, 2006, display the status of GIS and Digital Parcel Development across the Commonwealth.
- **[New Parcel Boundaries Viewer](#)** - 9/25/2006
Displays assessors' parcels for those communities with Level II-compliant parcel data, atop 2005 color ortho imagery, and with Open Space and base map features.

Events, Announcements and Staffing

MassGIS' Image Analyst, Philip John, was honored with a Performance Recognition Award at a banquet on October 27th at the Sheraton Boston. The PRP award is given to a very limited number of State Employees who demonstrate exemplary performance. Philip was nominated for this award because of his steadfast refusal to accept repeated explanations by a vendor as to why he was seeing errors in the data provided by the vendor. As it turned out, Philip was correct in his analysis and the vendor ultimately realized the errors and had to modify their procedures.

ValleyGIS: Five College GIS Day

November 8, 2006 at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts

NEARC 2006 21st Annual Northeast Arc Users Group Meeting

November 12-15, 2006 Mystic Marriott in Mystic, Connecticut.

The 2006 Massachusetts Smart Growth Conference

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association will co-host the 2006 Massachusetts Smart Growth Conference on December 1st at the DCU Center in Worcester. Registration deadline is November 22, 2006.

Any comments or suggestions about the GISette are welcomed at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS-The Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information is located within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and is charged with the collection, enhancement, storage and dissemination of the Commonwealth's geographic data.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)

251 Causeway St. Suite 500

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: (617) 626-1000

Fax: (617) 626-1249

